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June 9, 2011

Chairman Daniel R. Elliot, III
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

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Dear Chairman Elliot,

EP 705

Upon hearing that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) announced they will hold two hearings reviewing existing rail guidelines, I write this letter to urge the Board to maintain the current infrastructure and to bring to their attention how important the rail industry is to the economic vitality of Iowa, and the nation as a whole.

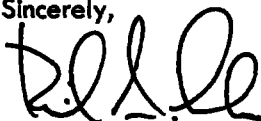
Iowa has been dependent on railroads and the rail industry for over two hundred years, but have really only prospered in the past twenty. With the help of the Staggers Rail Act in 1980, railroads have been able to maintain an agreeable infrastructure which has independently allowed favorable conditions to transport over 40 percent of Iowa's freight.

With rail rates decreasing by 55 percent since 1980 and rail companies re-investing their money to improve their infrastructures to make them the safest they have ever been, it's no wonder this transportation option is an attractive one.

It would be a shame to hand over the rail regulations to the government. Maintenance would be compromised, which in turn would drive businesses to truck their products across the state and nation. Transporting 100 percent of Iowa goods by truck would wreak havoc on roads and highways. It would also raise citizens' taxes for road upkeep. Overall, the revision of railway guidelines, as we know them today, would eventually hinder the attraction of Iowa as a place to live, work and do business.

On behalf of the Ames Economic Development Commission and the Ames Chamber of Commerce, please dismiss any changes to the current rail industry guidelines that so greatly impact the economic vitality of Iowa.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Culhane, CEcD
President & CEO
Ames Chamber & Economic Development Commission

